

Down Below

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Summary:

This is kind of an AU thing where Bill decides to accompany Georgie instead of letting him play outside alone. It's based off the 2017 movie, but I'm not really following the script because I forgot the order of events orz. This is a one shot too, but split into several parts.

1. Chapter 1

The heavy drops of rain splattering against the fogged-up windowpanes of his bedroom produce a rhythmic yet irritating sound effect that does little to alleviate the growing ache in his head.

Splat. Splat. Splat.

The rhythm is steady and continuous, though tedious in tune. Bill Denbrough thinks he'd rather listen to his mother's favourite song on repeat for hours than be forced to endure the endless rainy melody broadcast by the heavens above.

But despite the dull ache that plagues his head and the lingering cold that has bothered him for a week, the small paper boat he's been working on for the past half hour is almost done. There are only a few finishing touches to add on to it...

Using one hand to firmly grasp the boat, the other darts across his cluttered desk for a black marker.

"S.S Georgie..." He murmurs quietly to himself, acutely aware of his younger brother standing closely behind. The same words are carefully written onto the side of the boat, an action that prompts Georgie to lean forward even closer in great curiosity and interest. Excitement even. With their bodies gently touching, Bill can feel his brother's shoulders shaking vigorously in unconcealed anticipation.

"Do you h-have the wax, Georgie?" A small container is immediately thrust into his face in response. Nodding in silent approval, he accepts the wax and begins to paint over the surface of the boat, using an old, crusty paintbrush to lather on generous amounts of the gloppy substance. Within minutes, the S.S Georgie is finally complete - ready to embark on a watery adventure through the tiny rivers that hug the side of the road outside.

"She's all yours-" Before he can speak another word, he is abruptly crushed in a tight bear hug that leaves him breathless from its sheer suddenness. A gentle prodding of the elbows prompts his younger brother to eventually release him.

"Thank you, Billy!" Large eyes shine brightly in genuine gratitude. A small smile creeps across Bill's face as he affectionately ruffles the

boy's hair - a loving gesture that emphasises the presence of a close brotherly bond between the two of them.

"Be careful out there."

Georgie nods in understanding - albeit in a way that makes it seem like he isn't really listening at all - and excitedly grabs the boat from his waiting hands. A silent farewell is exchanged through their glances and then he is out the door, tiny footsteps pattering against the tiled floor in the distance.

Now that he is left alone in the dimly-lit bedroom, Bill turns his attention back on the pouring rain outside. It doesn't seem to be letting up anytime soon and he is starting to have second thoughts about allowing Georgie to play outside on his own. This isn't the first time this has happened though, so he figures there is no need for any concern. Their family knows everyone in the neighbourhood and on a rainy day like this, there is always bound to be at least one person gazing down through their window at the streets below.

And yet...

There seems to be an indescribable feeling in his gut telling him otherwise. Surely it won't hurt to be extra cautious?

"Georgie! W-wait!" He yells after his brother, sprinting out the door and down the long, narrow winding staircase. Georgie glances up in surprise, having already pulled on a bright yellow raincoat and now in the process of stepping into his pair of boots. The paper boat remains safely clutched in one hand. Sighing inwardly in genuine relief, Bill thanks the boat for having slowed down his brother's actions.

"I k-know I said I was sick, but I thought it might be better if I still w-went with you anyway." He struggles to get those simple words across as the cold chill brought on by the weather only seems to worsen his stutter.

Georgie shrugs nonchalantly, though internally grateful to his brother for deciding to accompany him; with his brother currently in junior high, spending quality time together is becoming a rare occurrence. He silently watches as Bill pulls on his own raincoat - a bright shade of blue decorated in polka dots (Bill had protested against his mother selecting such a design, but he eventually relented in the end) - and yanks the large hood over his head.

"All right, I-let's go." The front door slowly creaks open and they shiver when a strong gust of wind escapes into the entrance hallway, shrouding them in a freezing coldness that leaves obvious goosebumps on their pale skin. Eyeing the grey environment outside, Bill tightly grasps his brother's hand and steps into the pouring rain. His converse shoes make awful squelching sounds in the mud and he regrets his decision to wear such a nice pair on a day like this.

"Come on, I d-don't want to stay in the rain for too l-long."

Georgie hums in agreement. The heavy downpour is weighing down his yellow hood and obscuring his vision. Even with the raincoat and boots on, it feels like he's taking a cold shower out in the open. It's a curious but not entirely pleasant sensation, especially when the clouds above in the sky are painted in dark, angry shades of grey and black.

The siblings continue walking down the drenched footpath in search of a suitable starting line for the S.S Georgie. In the midst of all the rain and freezing chaos raging around them, they fail to notice the bright red balloon floating behind after them.

Slowly.

Closely.

Like it's purposely following them despite its inanimate nature.

Notes for the Chapter:

I don't usually write in present tense, mostly always past tense, so this is kind of a big accomplishment for me?? Idk I just find it hard to write in present sometimes. *Praise me.*

2. Chapter 2

"All right. T-this is a good s-spot."

The boys crouch around a specific part of the grey asphalt road, particularly pleased by the look of this area and the victorious vibe that seems to radiate off it. In hindsight, there is nothing that distinguishes this section from all the other streams of water that crisscross over the road, but this has always been their starting line for many years. And besides, selecting a place straight off the bat gives them a strong sense of confidence and victory.

Georgie carefully stoops down to lower his paper boat onto the moving waters, mumbling an inaudible "Thank you, Billie" as his attention is instantly shifted over to the tiny boat. It allows itself to be controlled by the strong currents and the siblings, noticing how fast the S.S Georgie appears to be going, immediately spring up from their crouched positions and start chasing after it in a mad panic.

"D-don't let it out of y-your sight!" Bill yells through the heavy rain, brushing water droplets away from his eyes as he splashes through the endless amounts of puddles obscuring the ground beneath his feet. Fuelled by his brother's yell of encouragement, Georgie runs even faster and-

There is a magnificently loud thud when the younger brother smacks head-first into a yellow road barrier. For a moment, he sits there wordlessly in a daze, unable to comprehend what has just happened. Once he comes to his senses, he turns around and gazes helplessly at his brother. Tears begin to well up in his large, brown eyes, from both the throbbing pain in his forehead and the possibility of losing the boat.

Bill helps him up and immediately continues the chase on his own, squinting to see past all the drops of rain threatening to cloud his vision. The S.S Georgie is still powering on through the stream of water, and there is no sign of it stopping. Though it is unclear where the boat seems to be heading, there is a large sewer in its path and Bill can only assume the worst. Despite the horrible ache in his limbs, he forces his legs to run even faster.

"Go Billie! You can do it!"

A small smile ghosts across his lips as he considers how ironic this situation has become; just a few minutes ago, he'd been the one trying to encourage his brother.

The distance between him and the paper boat doesn't seem to be growing any smaller however, and he holds his breath as it charges towards the sewers-

He exhales in unconcealed relief when it barely escapes what would've been an awful and slimy fate, having missed the sewers by a mere centimeter or two. The boat eventually comes to an abrupt stop by a manhole cover further down; at least that is what Bill thinks until he's actually close enough to see its resting place.

It's a manhole all right, but there is no cover.

Bill stands there hesitantly. From where he is, the blatant hole in the ground looks big enough for him to fall down. Too big. Has there always been a manhole this size here? He can probably fit through it with Georgie and there will still be some room left over for them to wiggle their arms around. Despite the strong feelings of anxiety and fear gnawing away at his senses, he succumbs to the urge to peer in. It's incredibly dark and slimy, and he can't see the bottom of it either. Two bright orange lights, shaped like bulbous eyes, flicker in the darkness below and Bill flinches at the sudden appearance. Rats, perhaps?

"Billie! Where's the boat?" Having been deep in thought, the sound of his brother's voice catches Bill by surprise and almost sends him toppling down into the hole. He mutters an inaudible curse under his breath and hastily steps away from it, making sure to pick up the boat in the process. Stupid boat.

"D-don't go near that h-hole, okay Georgie?" He warns, casting sideward glances at the ominous manmade creation behind him as he hands over the S.S Georgie. Though he originally didn't think the rain could get any heavier, it is, and now he figures it's time to finally go home.

"Let's g-go home now."

Georgie nods and grasps his brother's hand again - a feeble attempt to warm his own cold hands. His yellow raincoat is completely drenched and he suspects he's going to start sneezing soon. It's a miracle Bill himself isn't already, considering how his cold hasn't

even healed yet.

The two brothers begin walking away from the manhole but have taken no more than a step or two when an awful scraping abruptly fills their ears. Even with the unforgiving rain mercilessly pouring down around them, the sound is as clear as day and both siblings jump simultaneously in fear. It's a sound neither of them can accurately describe, no matter how hard they try. One way to describe it is long nails scraping against a chalkboard - and that is one anyone can imagine while cringing at the thought - but there is something *more* to it. Something... sinister. Even the longest nails in the world would be unable to produce a sound of such a terrifying calibre. As it slowly fades away to be replaced by the harsh pit-pattering of rain, they can still hear it clearly in their head. Repeating over, and over again.

At least, not until *It* appears.

Notes for the Chapter:

srry this is a short chapter

3. Chapter 3

Both siblings remain where they are, frozen in fear, as a pair of large, clawing hands reach out over the edge of the manhole. Foul-smelling puddles of grey slime lie in its wake as the human-like creature emerges without warning, and the brothers are so petrified by the awful sight before them that they don't even move to barricade their noses from the powerful stench. The only thing they can do is tremble and stare up at its large, intimidating figure. Ironically, it is quite evident by the nature of the white and red make-up smeared all over its face that it's supposed to resemble a clown, even despite its worn-out clothes and messy tangle of unbrushed hair.

It feels so surreal. Just so surreal. Bill pinches his arm hard to ensure he's not sleeping, and he's dismayed to find himself still stuck in this current situation. Eyes trained on the creature's own bulbous orange ones, (he now realises that perhaps the glowing lights he saw in the darkness did not belong to rats), a million questions run through his head at once. What is it? Is it human? Why is it dressed as a clown?

What does it intend to do to us?

The clown suddenly twitches - like it knows what Bill is thinking - and lunges forward in their direction, its snarling, red-painted mouth gaping open to reveal multiple sets of razor-sharp teeth. Its eyes bulge out in a gross fish-like fashion, the eyeballs on the edge of popping out of their sockets. For a moment, Bill remains standing there dumbly as he thinks about how the teeth reminds him of that one particular shark movie. He's only seen it once as a kid, but the memory of it still lingers heavily in his mind. The fear he felt then while watching the movie is similar to the fear he feels now, although this is on a different scale because it's happening in *real* life. For reasons unbeknownst, the Jaws theme begins playing in his head and it's not until he's actually staring directly down the clown's orange-illuminated throat that he finally snaps out of it and pushes Georgie away.

"Run, Georgie! G-get away from h-here!" He screams, raising one free hand to guard his face as the other has just been used to nudge his brother to safety.

Tears are continuously streaming down the younger boy's face as Georgie tightens his grip on the paper boat. He wishes he'd never gone out to play today, and that he'd never asked Bill to come with him. But despite the immense guilt consuming his heart and mind like a tornado, he hesitates before taking a step backward. Then another. And another.

His throat burns like crazy as his legs carry him further and further away from the manhole, the monster, and most important of all, his big brother. A terrified shriek threatens to ripple out from his mouth - a plea for help - but he only succeeds in releasing a tiny squeak not even his own ears can register through the panic and chaos erupting around him. The S.S Georgie falls to the ground as he picks up the pace, hands trembling in shock and horror.

Back at the hole, Bill's voice has become raspy and hoarse from all the pained screaming he's been engaging in. Surprisingly, he hasn't caught the attention of any neighbours yet and he feels like this is some cruel, sick joke played by the heavens above. Having been too late to do anything but protect his face earlier, his left arm is now left in the clutches of the creature's teeth. No matter how hard he thrashes or punches its nose in protest, it stubbornly refuses to release his limb.

"Let go of me, y-you sick fuck!" A lame insult, but otherwise still an insult that seems to do the trick. The clown slowly opens its mouth in response but before Bill can withdraw his arm, rows upon rows of shark-like teeth immediately clamp down again with a pressure so intense it ends up severing it instead.

Bill watches on in horror as the clown's red lips - now smeared all over with wet blood, *his* blood - curls upwards in a sickening smile. No, not a smile. It's more of a smirk, as the creature seems to be mocking him and his desperate attempt to free his limb. *Haha. Too bad.*

Blood spurts from the stump in steady streams, dribbling onto the asphalt road in a sticky mess. He's starting to feel dizzy and light-headed from the loss of vital liquids, and wonders if this is how he's going to die. It's a miracle he didn't faint from the pain, but now wishes he did. As his vision momentarily blurs, he can vaguely make out the clown chewing noisily on what must be his severed arm. It's a grotesque, squelchy sound that sounds nothing like eating "normal"

meat and he gags in reflex.

Once the meal is over, the clown dives back down into the manhole and Bill utters a sigh in unconcealed relief. The searing pain is beginning to play tricks on his senses and everything feels numb; both his mind and physical body. He manages to rip a piece off his shirt at least, and wraps it tightly around the stump. Just like in the movies.

A light turns on in the house closest to him and this lifts up his hopes for a chance of rescue. Through the pouring rain several metres away, he also barely sees Georgie running towards him with their parents in tow. Despite the missing limb, a small smile breaks out across his pale face as he realises that perhaps he's going to survive after all.

But just when it feels like things can't possibly get any worse, it does, and Bill's left screaming again when clawing hands grab at his ankle. Suddenly, all those people coming to his rescue seem so far away, and he paws helplessly at the ground beneath his writhing body as he's dragged towards the manhole. A low voice emanates from the darkness below him just before he drops over the edge.

"Hello, Billie boy. Would you like to float?"

4. Chapter 4

Hundreds, if not thousands, of images simultaneously flash through Bill's mind; each memory seems to last for hours, though in reality they vanish in the blink of an eye. As his hands flail uselessly in all directions, his mind goes blank for a moment as he's lost in the world of memories and childhood nostalgia. When he finally regains back control of his mind, he's startled to find himself dangling and suspended in thin air. While the creature still has its clawed hand tightly gripped around his ankle, part of his blue raincoat is snagged on a protruding pipe. In most cases, the heavy weight of the clown will have been more than enough to rip the coat and drag Bill down into the abyss, but this is not one of those cases.

The clown is *floating*.

Literally floating, without the support of solid ground.

Unable to fight back, Bill can only stare down at its glowing eyes and toothy grin. It doesn't seem to be doing anything to him *yet*, apart from hang onto his limb like a child with a helium-filled balloon. Nevertheless, the intimidating aura that surrounds its bulky figure is more than enough to have Bill fearing for his life. Along with the fact that he could fall down deeper into the manhole and possibly break his neck of course.

But just when he thinks all is lost (again), a voice yells out to him from above the hole.

"We're going to pull you up, Billie!"

He looks up and stares into the eyes of his brother, swollen and teary from continuous crying. There's a hand reaching down for him to grab a hold of, but it belongs not to Georgie, but to his father. He's never been more relieved to see his family again, and can feel an onslaught of tears threatening to burst through his eyelids. Their mother pops into view as she carefully nudges the younger brother away from the hole, fearing for the life of both sons.

Despite the unshakeable feeling of exhaustion overwhelming his entire body, Bill raises a trembling hand towards his father's own extended support. He can't help but sigh loudly in relief when their fingers finally touch and a strong hand envelops his own. Now all

he's got to do is somehow shake the horrid clown off and allow himself to be pulled back up.

The clown isn't entirely impressed with the family reunion occurring above however. In response to all this commotion, it suddenly yanks down on his ankle in a forceful manner and Bill's father almost loses his grasp. The boy screams in panic, a sudden rush of adrenaline coursing through his body in retaliation against the unwelcome scare. "What's wrong, Billie? Are you s-s-scared? Don't you want to float too? We've got alllll sorts of wonders down h-h-here..." The clown cruelly taunts, imitating his stutter in an attempt to mock him. It sort of works.

Bill closes his eyes, like doing so might save him from this nightmare, but it's mainly because he doesn't want to show the monster just how scared he really is. He doesn't want its taunts to be validated.

With his eyes firmly shut, other senses become heightened. He can feel the monster slowly but steadily climb up his leg like a ladder, while at the same time hear his father grunting from the effort of having to carry something that's suddenly increased in weight.

And that's when he hears something. Something... Almost strange and ethereal. Something unfamiliar, unlike anything he's ever heard.

A voice, not his own, is talking to him in his head. It seems to be talking only to him, as no-one else seems to notice anything else happening.

It gains its strength from the fears of children, Bill. Resist your fears and face them head-on.

But just as the voice appears out of nowhere, it vanishes just as fast, leaving only confused thoughts and questions unanswered. Bill still fully understands what it was trying to tell him though, and decides to put the advice into action.

"Y-you're not real. I'm not s-s-scared of you." He does his best to sound fierce and annoyed, but there's a limit to how much of a facade he can put on. Either way, the creature stops in its tracks and glares wordlessly at Bill. He wonders if provoking it to this extent is a good idea.

"I'm as real as you are, Billie."

Although it manages to retort back at him, he can sense the grip on his leg loosen. He needs to keep this up, no matter how terrified he is of what may happen.

"No, y-you're not. You're lying."

The grip loosens some more, but the toothy grin on the clown's face is contorting into a demonic snarl. It's angry.

"I-if you're that real and strong, I wouldn't be alive right now, huh?"

That's the last straw. The clown suddenly releases his limb as it prepares to maul and mangle his body, claws extending from the ends of its white gloves.

But before it can actually attack him, Bill's father is finally given the opportunity to yank him up and out of the manhole.

The boy hurriedly lifts his legs out of the way and in doing so, notices the downtrodden, disappointed expression on its face. With Bill now in the safety of his family and hordes of other adults, there's no way it can drag him back in again. Instead, it floats down further into the darkness and vanishes completely out of sight. Not even a single shred of evidence of it ever being there is left in plain view.

"T-that's right! Stay there and never come back, you asshole!" Bill hollers into the hole until he's pulled away by his parents and carried onto an ambulance stretcher.

The nurses attend to his wounds as best as they can while they kickstart the engine. His family is seated around the stretcher, watching him with worried eyes.

"M-mom... Dad..." He weakly grins, and they smile back in return, though the anxious expressions in their eyes don't fade away. Georgie stays the closest to him, and waves their paper boat around in his face as if to say, "look, we've still got it," but then realises now isn't the time for such things and quietly shoves it away into his pockets. Even though he knows he's safe for now, Bill can't stop thinking about the clown and the fact it tried to eat him. It feels like he can't settle down completely until he tells his parents about the ordeal.

Before he can say a word however, his mother speaks up first.

"Bill! What the hell were you doing near that hole? You're only lucky Georgie came home to tell us what you were doing!"

"I-We were playing, but then a clown-" He splutters in protest. He's shocked that the only thing his mother can think of doing is

reprimand them for going out in the rain.

"No buts! I told you today was going to storm, and you even had the audacity to go out while sick and bring Georgie along with you!"

Bill stares at her numbly.

"We were attacked... By a c-clown..." His voice trails off and Georgie nods his head vigorously to confirm the answer.

Their parents look at each other for a moment before bursting out laughing. It doesn't last long however, as the sight of their son's severed arm brings them back to their senses.

"What are you saying? Our neighbour says you cut your arm on some road construction equipment." His mother looks out the ambulance's back-window and gestures at the crowd of adults still huddled around the manhole, discussing with themselves over what to do with the sudden anomaly.

"Your father here didn't see any... *clown* either, did he?"

Bill glances helplessly at his father who, much to his disappointment, pipes up in agreement.

"No, I saw nothing while dragging you up, son. Your coat was snagged on a pipe, so it took longer than expected to rescue you."

His heart sinks. Sensing his emotions, Georgie butts into the conversation to have his own input.

"We saw it, mom! There *was* a clown! It ate Billie's arm!"

Their mother hits his leg gently, though a stern expression remains on her tired face. It's obvious she's getting sick of this.

"You boys are letting your imagination get the best of you. There was NO clown, and that's that. It was the rain playing tricks on your mind, got it?"

"And besides, if there IS - supposedly - *someone* going around harming children, the neighbour would've seen him."

The brothers look at each other in shocked silence, unable to believe what they're hearing. Bill looks away from his parents and out the window. A red balloon floats gently amidst the wind in the distance but he keeps quiet about it. It's strange, and he doesn't know the reason why, but perhaps children are the only ones who can see the monster. The adults are all useless.

"Yeah. I g-g-guess it was all in my h-head then." He quietly responds, and allows himself to drift off to sleep. The exhaustion is becoming

too much for him and he doesn't want to think about it anymore.

Notes for the Chapter:

Well that's the end! Sorry this chapter was pretty crappy, I wasn't sure how to end it.

I haven't read the book or wiki page yet, so the voice is just my own interpretation of a certain "celestial" character (wink wink).

Also, uh... I feel the ending is kinda unrealistic as well. I mean, surely Bill would've bled to death by now or something?¿¿

Anyway, thank you all for the comments and kudos! I hope you guys liked the story despite its rushed ending. :;))